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ABSTRACT

This packet contains a presenter's outline and notes, an outline of major points, transparency masters, and the text of the presentation entitled "Finding Equity Issues in the Schools." The presentation is an introduction to educational equity and how it fits in with educational trends and thinking. The purpose of the presentation is to illustrate that (1) equity issues are integral components in several major educational themes and (2) excellence in education cannot be achieved unless equity issues in the school system are identified and satisfactorily resolved. The presentation, which is scheduled to take 15-30 minutes to complete, covers the following topics: what is equity, equity and educational thinking, emerging trends and equity issues, quality education and equity issues, effective schooling practices and equity issues, and achieving excellence in education. A list of references is included in the presentation. (KC)

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WORKING FOR EQUITY

Finding Equity Issues in the Schools

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This packet contains a presenter's outline and notes, and an outline of major points for the presentation entitled "Finding Equity Issues in the Schools."

The presentation and transparency masters are attached.

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FINDING EQUITY ISSUES

Presenter's Outline

PURPOSE	This presentation is an introduction to educational equity and how it fits in with educational trends and thinking. The purpose of the presentation is to illustrate that (a) equity issues are integral components in several major educational themes, and (b) excellence in education cannot be achieved unless equity issues in the school system are identified and satisfactorily resolved.
TIME	This presentation will normally take between 15 and 30 minutes, depending on detail and discussion.
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE AUDIENCE	The audience will typically include teachers, principals and/or specialists, who may or may not have any previous knowledge of educational equity or equity issues. The audience might also include classified staff or parents and community members.
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE PRESENTER	The person giving this presentation is assumed to have a working knowledge of basic equity topics (such as forms of bias, bias in curriculum materials, bias in interactions and behaviors) as they apply to different curriculum areas (such as language arts, social science, math, physical education, counseling). Ideally, the presenter should be a local equity resource person who has received training from equity professionals.

Presenter's Notes

1. Make sure to read the text several times and know "by heart" the points you want to make, especially from the introduction and closing sections. Be able to phrase those main points in your own words. Try to be succinct and not wordy. Have someone listen to you practice your main points; replace jargon with simple terms; replace vague references with concrete examples.

2. In the body of the presentation (themes and equity issues) there will probably be more specific equity examples than you need or will have time to talk about. So, read through this section beforehand and pick out the equity examples that are most relevant to your situation. For example, if you know that math and science are district priorities, emphasize the equity issues relating to those areas. Also, you may think of examples that are unique to your building or district, using your own course titles, enrollment figures, etc.

3. The equity examples given in the text are all supported by evidence. However, they are generalizations, which means that they may not be true of any particular individual or any particular grouping of students. If someone in the audience wants to argue a point with you by discussing how the generalization doesn't apply ("it's not like that with my students"), re-emphasize that every generalization has exceptions, but that, nonetheless, the equity problem or issue is supported by enough information that we can say in general that it is likely to be so. Also recognize that the "argument" may in fact be evidence of an equity strength in the building or district (i.e. it may be true in general but it is not true here).

4. The "References" section lists several of the basic sources where many, if not all, of the equity examples can be found or are discussed. If people question your sources, referring them to these references will usually suffice. However, if someone in the audience challenges you for more detailed evidence or more specific citations, tell them that you will find the information and get back to them. Then call the Center for Sex Equity and let us get you off the hook!

5. The catchy way to connect the three themes is illustrated by Transparency #5.

   ET (stands for Emerging Trends)
   QE (stands for Quality Education)
   ESP (stands for Effective Schooling Practices)

   After all the themes are explained and discussed, draw out the letter "E" from each theme to stand for "Equity," the common thread.

6. Re-emphasize at the end of your presentation that Finding Equity Issues will not (by itself) solve any problems; it's only the first step. Once equity issues are identified, the process next moves along to considering reasonable alternatives and then to planning for specific actions, activities, projects, etc. in various specific curricular areas.

FINDING EQUITY ISSUES

Outline of Major Points

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Equity is an important issue for educators to consider.

2. Equity will play a major role in determining whether excellence in education is achieved.

II. WHAT IS EQUITY?

1. Recognizing and reducing bias and discrimination, against both sexes, all groups of people.

2. "Costs" of bias and discrimination, now (school) and future (work/careers).

III. EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL THINKING

1. Equity issues are imbedded in current educational themes.

2. Themes will help define excellence in education and how to achieve it.

IV. THEME #1: EMERGING TRENDS (AND EQUITY ISSUES)

1. Technology and the Information Era

2. Personal Responsibility and Initiative

3. Global-Multicultural Perspective

V. THEME #2: QUALITY EDUCATION (AND EQUITY ISSUES)

1. Basic Skills Proficiency

2. Higher Order Skills Emphasis

3. Strong Self-Concept

4. Appreciation for Cultural Diversity

5. Career Planning and Work Skills

VI. THEME #3: EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING PRACTICES (AND EQUITY ISSUES)

1. Administrative Leadership

2. Instructional (academic) Emphasis

3. High Expectations

4. School Environment

5. Assessment and Evaluation

VII. ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

1. Must progress through levels (or steps) to the top:

   a. Desegregation
   b. Equal Access
   c. Equitable Treatment
   d. Equitable Outcomes
   e. Quality Education

2. Desegregation and access are the "easy" steps; equitable treatment and outcomes are "harder" steps because issues and problems are more subtle and may be more pervasive.

VIII. CLOSING

1. Identifying equity issues (the focus of this paper) is only the <u>first</u> stage.

2. The next steps involve identifying alternatives and planning for actions and activities that will resolve equity problems.

(1)

EMERGING TRENDS

- Technology
- Responsibility & Initiative
- Global Perspective

(2)

QUALITY EDUCATION

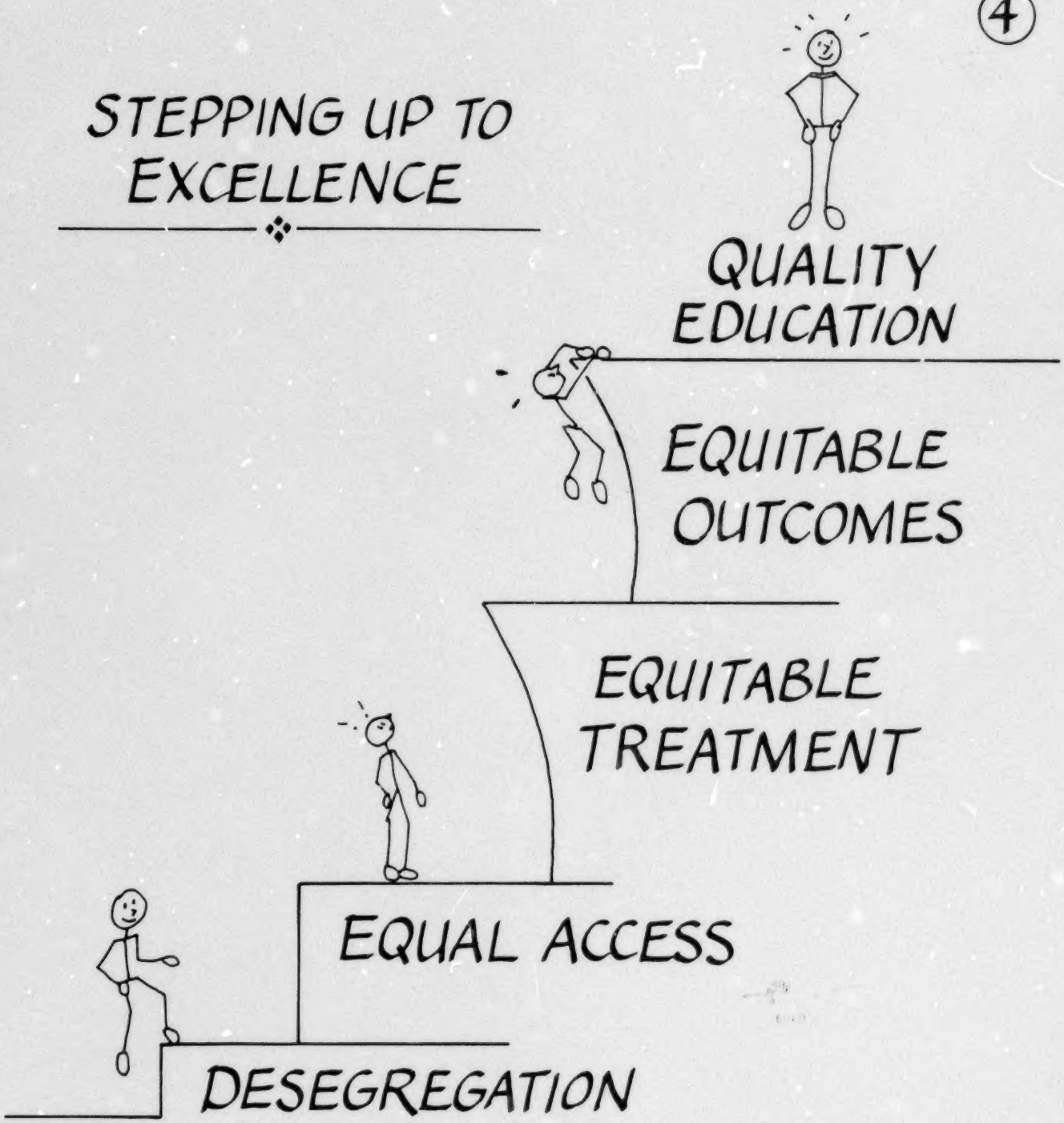
- Basic Skills Proficiency
- Higher Order Skills
- Strong Self-Concept
- Appreciate Cultural Diversity
- Career Planning & Work Skills

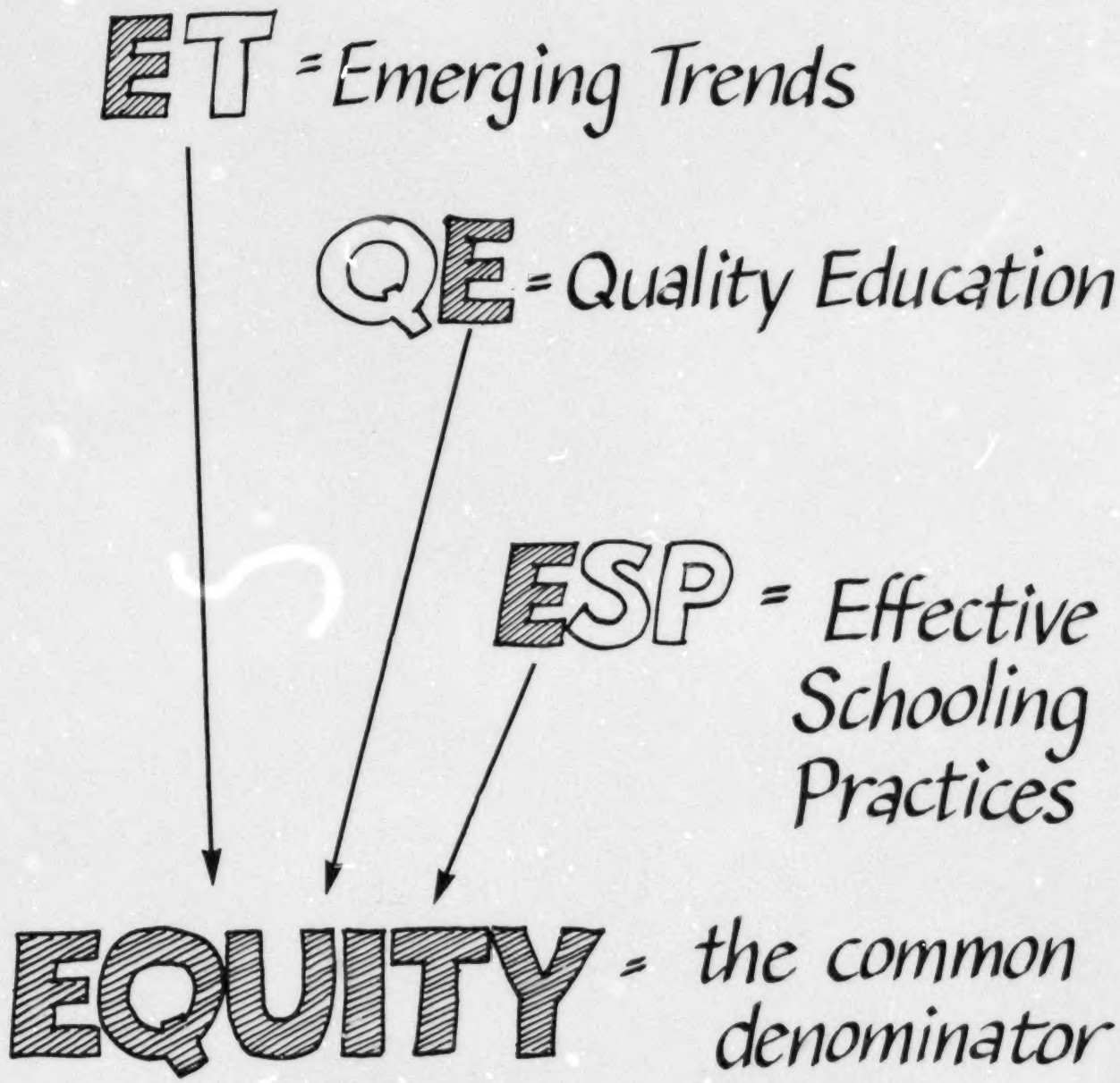
EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING PRACTICES

- Administrative Leadership
- Instructional Emphasis
- High Expectations
- Conducive Environment
- Regular Assessment

4

STEPPING UP TO EXCELLENCE




ET = Emerging Trends
QE = Quality Education
ESP = Effective Schooling Practices
EQUITY = the common denominator

Finding Equity Issues in the Schools

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FINDING EQUITY ISSUES IN THE SCHOOLS

Prepared by Pat Ruzicka

Developed for Model Program Site Cadres

September 1983

FINDING EQUITY ISSUES IN THE SCHOOLS

By Pat Ruzicka

INTRCDUCTION

Equity is an important but often misunderstood component in today's educational system. Many people think that federal and state laws have solved all the equity problems and issues. Some people believe that equity is a "trigger word" for the feminist movement. Many educators would initially view equity as still another piecemeal addition to the school curriculum, an add-on requiring more money, materials or staff time than is available.

The truth is that legislation has not solved all the equity issues, that equity is not solely the concern of feminists and that equity is not an add-on to the school curriculum. Congress and the courts are still drafting and interpreting equity legislation. Men and women--parents, educators, community people--are concerned that students receive equal educational opportunity. Equity issues are embedded in every single aspect of the school system including curricular subjects, extra-curricular activities, student and staff behaviors.

Most importantly, equity issues must be identified and resolved if a school or district wishes to provide a quality education. In the coming years, equity will be a primary criterion, a measuring stick against which excellence in education will be judged.

WHAT IS EQUITY?

Educational equity means recognizing and reducing biases and discriminatory practices that stand in the way of equal opportunity and equal treatment for people of both sexes, all racial and ethnic groups, and other groups of people such as the physically handicapped and developmentally disabled. Inequities in the school curriculum or instructional practices can be harmful to students and staff and can have far-reaching consequences.

Bias and discrimination affect all students; there are "costs" to both boys and girls, both now and in the future. Biases (attitudes of pre-judgment based on preconceived notions or expectations) impose subtle limitations on students which influence the quality of instruction and learning. That in turn affects student achievement in school, which ultimately takes its toll in terms of work life and productivity by reducing the choices and opportunities available for jobs and careers.

EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL THINKING

Equity issues are imbedded in at least three major "themes" which are becoming familiar to most educators. These themes are (1) emerging trends, (2) quality education, and (3) effective schooling practices. Taken as a whole, these themes will shape educational goals and practices during the next five to ten years and will help educators to define excellence in education and to determine how best to achieve it.

The following sections present the important components of each theme and identify some specific issues or problems that relate to educational equity. You will notice some overlap and duplication. This is because of the similarity among several of the component parts of the themes. Consequently, the specific equity issues relative to those areas are also repeated. Repetition serves to reinforce the importance of equity as a standard for judging excellence in education.

EMERGING TRENDS AND EQUITY ISSUES

The gradual shift from an industrial society to an information society, or the shift from large corporations to small businesses, are examples of emerging trends which give a general sense of the direction our country will be moving in the next decade. Emerging trends are broad, nationwide shifts in thoughts, opinions and behaviors. Trends affect economics, politics and social life; they affect the quality of life and work in other countries and cultures as well as our own; they cannot be ignored. Educators are realizing that schooling must be responsive to these trends that tell us what to expect in the future.

Trends can be grouped into three broad areas--those dealing with technology, those dealing with personal responsibility and initiative, and those dealing with the global or multicultural nature of things. Each of these areas contain specific concerns that pertain to educational equity.

1. Technology and the Information Era.

   - MATH ANXIETY AND AVOIDANCE. Proportionally fewer girls go on to take advanced math or science classes beyond the minimum requirements for high school graduation. Thus, young women are less prepared than men in the skills of computation, spatial visualization and logical thinking. These skills will be basic requirements for occupations in the technology era. A solid math background is already a "critical filter" for a growing number of post-secondary programs and courses of study.

     Not studying math and science will automatically cut women off from many choices about jobs, careers and life directions, and will perpetuate the disparity between men and women in overall earning power.

   - COMPUTER ANXIETY. In general, girls tend to be less comfortable and less familiar with computers and their uses, and often believe that they cannot do as well in class as boys can. By graduation time, proportionally fewer girls have mastered advanced computer skills such as programming and application, and girls have accumulated considerably less "hands-on" computer time than boys have. Consequently, women are less proficient in computer skills when they enter the workforce.

     This is significant because over the next seven to ten years the growth of computer related occupations is expected to increase three times faster than all other occupations combined. In addition, being able to apply computer technology will be a basic part of almost every job and career by 1990.

Computer inequities can be influenced by a number of factors, including: stereotyped expectations of who can or will use the computer and who can progress to what levels of understanding; differential use of the computer for instruction; the nature and kinds of software used; and conditions surrounding the voluntary (or free time) use of computers in the school building.

- MINORITY STUDENTS. For these students, the ability to develop math, science and computer skills is often connected to an access issue as well as an instructional one. Proportionally more minority students are diagnosed as needing remedial instruction, often for reasons other than lack of skill proficiency. Thus they may not gain access to advanced classes, or they may spend the majority of their computer time doing drill and practice and very little time learning other uses and applications of the computer.

  The lower socioeconomic status of minority groups in general also complicates the picture and has subtle but powerful influence on instructional opportunities. Information supports that, in general, more children of affluent parents tend to have computers at home. These children get more practice in using the computer and tend to get more attention and hands-on time in school.

- INEQUITIES IN THE WORKFORCE. Women are already beginning to cluster in the lower paying, lower level computer occupations. Women make up over 75 percent of all keypunch and computer operator positions, but considerably less than 25 percent of the upper level positions such as programmer or systems analyst.

  More and more women are working because of economic necessity; they must work to support themselves and/or their families. (Almost 90 percent of all single parent families are headed by women, and about 15 percent of all families have a woman head of household.) The paradox, however, is that women (especially minority women) are rapidly becoming a larger proportion of the people in this country who are living at or below the poverty level.

  Educators must determine whether they are giving students information that limits or expands their job/career choices. In school, girls and young women may be subtly counseled out of higher level or higher paying jobs because of stereotypic or traditional expectations about appropriate careers for women and/or men. If this trend is not reversed, most working women will remain in low paying or entry level jobs in the technology era; they will be the word processor operators rather than the computer programmers.

  Important curriculum areas include: math, science, career/vocational education, counseling, computer education.

2. Personal Initiative and Responsibility

- SELF CONCEPT. Development of positive self concept and self esteem, not limited by stereotypes or personal and cultural biases

- SELF EXPRESSION. Ability to identify own position or thoughts on issues and to present them to others, not limited by stereotyped notions of appropriate or inappropriate behavior.

- LEADERSHIP. Ability to contribute to the decision making process; effective use of communication skills; taking responsible actions to solve problems.

- PARENTING. Boys and young men need more attention to parenting and/or home living. Many will have wives who must work to help support the family, or they may be living alone, with or without children.

- Important curricular areas include: language arts, social studies, counseling, physical education, health, art, music, drama, extracurricular activities, teacher planning and implementation of classroom learning activities and/or student projects.

3. Global/Multicultural Perspective

- "SHRINKING WORLD." There is much evidence that nations are becoming more dependent upon one another and that what happens in one country can have far-reaching effects in many others. The United States conducts a larger percentage of its business with more foreign countries. Foreign products (such as autos or electronic items) are competitive if not superior to those in the United States and are taking a larger share of the United States market. The United States is no longer the dominant economic force in the world, but only one of a growing number of economically strong countries. Future survival will depend on interdependence and mutual cooperation among people of different countries, cultures and customs.

- CULTURAL DIVERSITY. The three largest minority groups in the nation are Blacks, Hispanics (Spanish-speaking) and Asians; in addition, there are at least 50 other ethnic groups with sizable populations in the United States.

  Living in a world of cultural diversity means that students of the majority culture as well as the minority cultures must learn to recognize and reduce stereotypes and biases associated with different groups of people.

- MINORITY WOMEN. Inequities for minority women are more likely because they face discrimination based on their sex as well as their race or national origin. Because of this "double discrimination," minority women will continue to encounter obstacles in developing skills for personal and economic survival.

- Important curricular activities include: history, geography, social studies, foreign languages, ESL, counseling.

Equity issues may also be a part of student diagnosis and assessment of progress, student groupings, teacher planning and implementation of learning activities, employment and staffing, extracurricular activities, behaviors and interactions among students and teachers.

QUALITY EDUCATION AND EQUITY ISSUES

"Quality" has already become a key theme for the improvement of schools and schooling. There are many educators who believe that the quality of curriculum offerings, student activities and teaching practices must improve drastically for this country to survive economically and for students to master the skills they will need to function as effective workers and citizens. Even those who feel there are "pockets" of educational excellence across the nation would agree that there is still room for improvement.

Just what is a quality education? Many educators cite the following five components: basic skills proficiency, higher order skills emphasis, strong self-concept, career planning and work skills, and appreciation for cultural diversity. As with the trends theme, each area contains some specific concerns that pertain to educational equity.

1. Basic Skills Proficiency: calculations, critical thinking, communication, computer skills

   - Girls and young women tend to be less proficient in basic mathematics skills and spatial visualization (refer to discussion in Emerging Trends section).

   - Girls and young women tend to have less confidence in their ability to solve problems through logical thinking; consequently, they tend to be less proficient because they shy away from those kinds of experiences and activities.

   - Minorities and young women tend to be less proficient in computer skills because they receive less hands-on time or differential treatment during instructional activities (refer to discussion in Emerging Trends section).

   - The way language is used, in both writing and speaking, formally and informally, can convey subtle biases which reinforce existing stereotypic expectations and behaviors. It especially important to understand customs, habits and traditions when communicating with people of ethnic/minority groups.

2. Higher Order Skills Emphasis: analysis, synthesis, evaluation and judgment

   - Minority students who may possess these skills may still be identified as less proficient because of a language barrier and not because of actual skill deficiency.

- Girls and young women tend to be seen as less proficient in higher order skills, partly because of stereotyped notions about their ability to judge, analyze and synthesize information. This may even result in teachers conveying expectation (consciously or unconsciously) that girls cannot develop higher-order skills.

3. Strong Self-Concept

- Stereotyping and biases can limit one's sense of self and potential. This can be conveyed through biased curriculum materials as well as through behaviors and interactions which reflect bias.

- Differential expectations or treatment of students during instruction can reinforce existing inequities. (Examples: girls or minority students feeling as if they will never learn; boys feeling the pressure to achieve and excel).

4. Appreciation for Cultural Diversity

- Isolated, selective or unrealistic study of a minority group and its characteristics, achievements, etc., can result in glossing over of actual achievements and problems faced in relation to the dominant culture (refer to discussion in Emerging Trends section).

- People speaking only one language--even if that language is English--may often be at a disadvantage among others who speak more than one language.

5. Career Planning and Work Skills

- Teachers should provide accurate job/career information to students, e.g., low pay vs. high pay jobs; skills required for jobs; how technology will influence existing jobs as well as create many new kinds of jobs that today are unheard of.

- Curriculum and instruction should reflect that jobs/careers be pursued on the basis of interests and abilities and not be influenced by notions of what is traditionally appropriate for men or for women.

- Educators should regularly review class enrollments (proportions of girls, boys, minority students) according to job/career trends. If there are disparities in classes such as advanced math, science, computer education, career/vocational education, the reasons for disparate enrollments should be identified and steps taken to reduce them.

- Educators may need to take affirmative steps to help keep girls, boys, minority students in the classes they tend to be dropping.

- Appropriate work experiences and adult mentors for women and minorities, and for men and women in nontraditional careers should be provided.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING PRACTICES AND EQUITY ISSUES

Effective schooling practices have to do with those things that make schools better places for students to learn. Some schools seem to be better at it than others. Research is showing that certain approaches and procedures tend to focus an entire school staff on helping students to reach higher levels of achievement. This research is the basis for identifying schooling practices which will help to improve instruction.

Effective schooling practices generally fall into one of the following categories: administrative leadership, instructional emphasis, expectations of students and staff, school environment, assessment and monitoring of student progress. Again, there are specific equity issues in each category, and some of the equity issues are the same ones that have been mentioned in connection with previous themes.

1. Administrative Leadership

- The strongest influence that leaders at the building or district level can have is to "make legitimate" the identification or local equity issues and taking actions toward resolving them. By introducing ideas, getting people involved, making decisions and keeping people working until the job is finished, leaders can increase attention and commitment to equitable and effective instruction.

- The principal has been identified as a key instructional leader. Without the principal's involvement and commitment, new ideas will not be implemented as smoothly or last as long. The principal can help identify current equity strengths and weaknesses by consulting with staff, students, parents and community to collect opinions and information; by analyzing curriculum areas and instructional practices; by identifying equity goals that are integrated into existing building or district priorities and objectives.

- The principal can involve teachers, can support their projects and plans for improving inequities in curriculum or behaviors, and can give recognition for progress toward goals that promote equity.

2. Instructional Emphasis

- BASIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. Specific equity concerns are the same ones that have been presented in the sections on Emerging Trends (math anxiety, computer anxiety) and Quality Education (basic skills proficiency). Refer to pp. 2,3 and 5.

- COGNITIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. Specific equity concerns are the same ones that have been presented in the section on Quality Education (higher order skills). Refer to pp. 5-6.

- TEACHING ATTENTION. Girls tend to receive less instructional attention than boys; they receive less academic stimulation, fewer complex or abstract questions, and less instruction on how to do things for themselves.

- ACHIEVEMENT. Young girls test out equal to or higher than boys on achievement tests; as they progress through school, however, their achievement scores tend to decline while boys' scores increase; this trend is particularly evident in math and science areas (Sadkers).

- STUDENT TREATMENT. Teachers' interactions with students are likely to be influenced by stereotyped expectations, e.g., boys are expected to do better in math and science, while girls are expected to do better in reading and language arts.

3. High Expectations of Students and Staff

- Students of both sexes and all groups are expected to learn, to achieve, to develop toward their full potential and not be limited or restricted by stereotypic or traditional notions. Expectations are not reduced for certain groups of students or in certain curricular areas.

- Teachers are expected to teach, to be motivated and interested in their work and their students, to plan and participate and learn from staff development activities. Teacher expectations, assignments or staffing patterns should not be influenced by unconscious biases or stereotypes.

4. School Environment

- FACILITIES. Administrative assignment and/or use of building areas and rooms can reflect inequities which will ultimately detract from effective schooling, e.g., segregated or isolated workspaces, locker space, office space. Facilities inequities will affect both students and teachers.

- CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT. Seating arrangments may tend to isolate certain groups of students; arrangement of toys, books, posters, displays may perpetuate stereotypic ideas of what is appropriate for girls or boys, or certain groups of students; access to supplementary learning materials or extracurricular activities may also perpetuate biases and stereotypes.

- PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT (behavior management). Codes of conduct or dress may be different for boys and girls, or a universal code may be applied differentially to certain groups of students (e.g., boys tend to have more referrals and suspensions for discipline-related reasons); assignment of students to duties and chores (e.g., hall monitor, carrying equipment, clean-up) should not be influenced by sex of the student.

5. Assessment and Evaluation

- Diagnosis of student learning needs may be unconsciously biased because of personal preconceptions (e.g., quieter students judged to know less of the content).

- Monitoring of student progress may be unconsciously biased: quieter students are more likely to be forgotten or "passed over lightly" in the monitoring process (e.g., Asian students); criteria may be applied differently (e.g., girls are judged more for the neatness of their work; boys more for the academic quality).

- There should be regular assessment and evaluation of progress toward resolving equity problems at the building and district levels.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

A school building or district must progress through several steps before it can truly say that a quality education is being provided. The first step is that of physical desegregation. In part, the equity issues at this step are resolved by coming into compliance with state and federal regulations concerning desegregation and anti-discrimination. Even though "paper compliance" is achieved, there still may be equity issues to resolve at this step. Things to look for include:

- regularly updated self-evaluations of Title IX compliance.

- "pockets" of compliance or non-compliance in different curricular areas.

- office areas which are physically separated (example: men's and women's PE teachers having offices in the girls' and boys' locker rooms respectively).

- student areas which may be unintentionally segregated (example: storage lockers for vocational education--girls' lockers in "home ec" area, boys' lockers in "shop" area).

- teacher work areas or facilities which may tend to physically isolate groups of people during informal social gatherings.

The second step along the road to quality education involves equal access: the same opportunities should be available to all. If something is required, it should be required of everyone and not be conditional or be waived for certain classifications of people; if something is optional, then everyone should have the same options and not be subject to pressure (overt or covert) to make certain choices or to avoid certain others. Access issues can pertain to employers as well as to students. Things to look for include:

- Student policies and procedures that allow for equal access to classes and extracurricular activities, and for equal opportunity to receive student services.

- Student handbooks that include statements of students' rights, grievance procedures for students and sources of further assistance if they believe that access or opportunity is being denied.

- Staff policies and procedures that allow for equitable employment practices: hiring, assignment of work (classes taught, duties, extracurricular responsibilities), promotion, transfer, termination, layoff (RIF), recall, grievance.

- Grievance procedures that are known to all and are clear, relevant and usable. Identification and use of an informal (in-building or in-district) procedure can often resolve many issues before the stages of formal complaints, hearings, etc.

The third step involves equitable treatment of students (and employees, too, although that is not the main focus of this presentation). Even with equal access, once students get into classes, certain groups of students may become the victims of differential treatment which can inhibit their ability to learn and to achieve. Teachers don't intentionally treat students unfairly; inequitable treatment of students is often subtle and may occur because it is rooted in personal attitudes about different kinds of people and in long-standing habits of behavior. Some places in school where equitable treatment issues may be hiding include:

- Scheduling or assignment of students to classes

- Counseling of students regarding classes or job/career options

- Providing equitable opportunities for student learning once they're in the classes

- Teacher attention and treatment of students during instruction (examples: unconscious reinforcement of boys for quality of work and girls for neatness; expecting boys to try and fail a few times while giving girls too much help too soon)

- Differential application of discipline standards/policies

- Teacher behavior: informational interactions with students; interactions with other teachers serve as models for student behavior

The final step in achieving quality education has to do with equitable outcomes for students. Educational outcomes should be based on high expectations for all students, not attaching conditions or accepting mediocrity from students who fall into a particular category such as Blacks, or girls, or limited-English speakers. Schools should ensure that all students will be equally prepared in the skills and knowledge of the future. At this step, equity issues may be imbedded in:

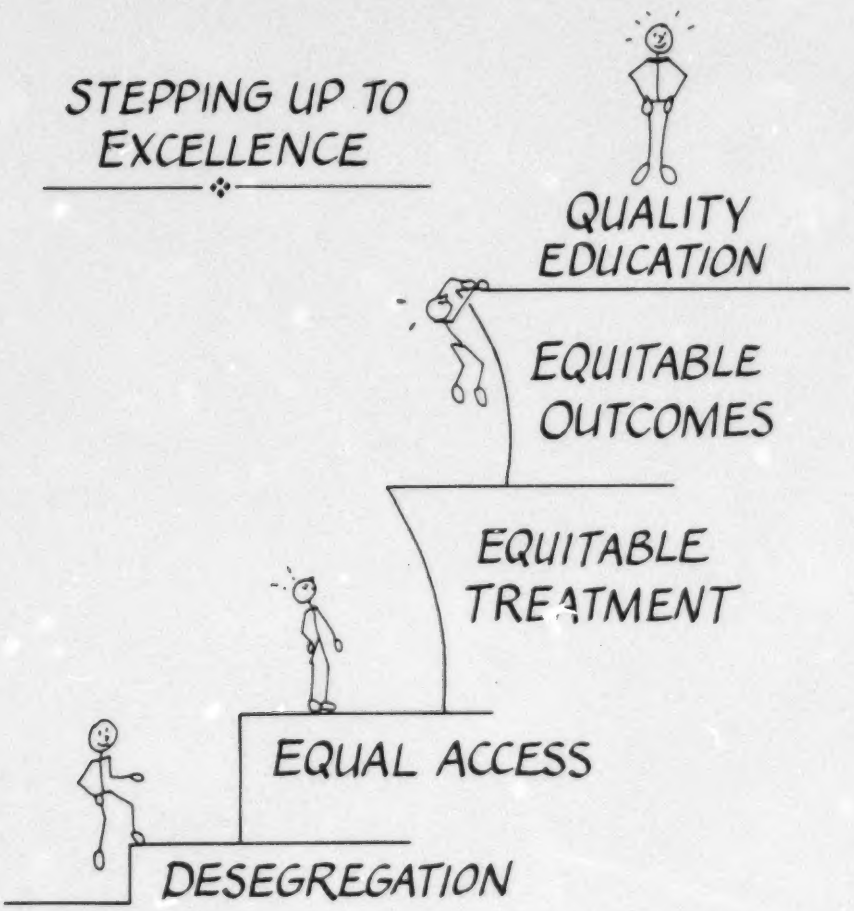
- diagnosis of student needs, which may be biased because of instruments, techniques, criteria

- monitoring of student progress, which may be differential because of different expectations or beliefs about students' abilities

- conditions affecting the selection and/or use of standardized tests for identification of students with special needs (example: using math scores to identify gifted students). Many standardized math tests are weighted toward spatial visualization ability; girls typically score lower on these tests because they have less opportunity to develop that ability. Thus, using math scores as criteria for a TAG program may eliminate many gifted girls from the program.

The diagram below presents the steps involved in achieving excellence in education. The first two steps, desegregation and equal access, are relatively easy ones to traverse. The steps involving equitable treatment and outcomes are more difficult to climb because issues are more subtle and pervasive and it usually takes more time and effort to work through the issues at these steps. All four steps must be attempted, but the effort is worth it. Upon arriving at the top educators can confidently say they are providing quality education to students.

Figure 1: Stepping Up to Excellence



CLOSING

"You can have equity without quality but you can't have quality without equity." (B. Landers)

Equity means doing things fairly; it does not necessarily mean doing things of quality or relevance For example, you may require all students to wear one black shoe and one brown shoe to school, but that has nothing to do with their learning or achievement. However, in order to achieve goals of quality in the schools (example: preparing all students for working in the information/technology era) means working through the obstacles of inequity that would impede or stop you from reaching that goal.

Identifying equity issues is important, but remember that finding the problem is <u>not</u> the same as solving it. After this stage, the entire process must move on to focusing on specific curricular areas, to weighing different alternatives, and to planning for actions, activities, projects or programs that meet local needs and fit with existing goals and priorities.

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